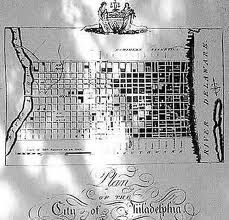
Throughout history, Philadelphia has been home to countless people and institutions that have pioneered all aspects of American Life. Starting with its foundation in 1682 by William Penn, Philadelphia has continued to hold importance spanning across over 300 years of its existence to the present. Michael Zuckerman demonstrates this idea in his article about *“A City of Firsts”* by stating “Philadelphians organized almost all the essential institutions of the modern America that emerged in the nineteenth century.”1 Philadelphia has been home to many “firsts” not only in America but the world as well. This article will hardly scratch the surface of Philadelphia’s importance but will provide sufficient information to solidify its influence in the economic, political, and social scopes of American Life. In an attempt to clearly demonstrate how each “first” impacted an aspect of American Life, the events have been color-coded; red-economic, blue- political and green- social.

**A Timeline of Philly Firsts!**

**1682-** Upon its founding in 1682 by William Penn, Philadelphia became the first city to guarantee its residents religious freedom.2

[](http://www.google.com/imgres?sa=X&hl=en&biw=1440&bih=783&tbm=isch&tbnid=vnxK8frhn5eQ-M:&imgrefurl=http://www.geog.nau.edu/courses/alew/ggr346/ft/midatlantic/philadelphia/&docid=Iy_sWcTew1zJ9M&imgurl=http://www.geog.nau.edu/courses/alew/ggr346/ft/midatlantic/philadelphia/philly-wall-plan.jpg&w=424&h=408&ei=59Z5UYfTJNPG4AO-sYCACQ&zoom=1&ved=1t:3588,r:9,s:0,i:113&iact=rc&dur=1021&page=1&tbnh=173&tbnw=180&start=0&ndsp=30&tx=45&ty=72)

**1697-** The first bridge in America, “King’s Highway Bridge” was erected in the Holmesburg section of Philadelphia. It is still in use and is the oldest bridge in America.

**1751-** Even now, Philadelphia is home to some of the best medical centers and hospitals in the nation however it all started in 1751 when Benjamin Franklin co-founded the first hospital, Pennsylvania Hospital. 3

**1689-** The William Penn Charter School became the first public grammar school in the colonies (later America).3

**1731-** The Free Library of Philadelphia was founded by Benjamin Franklin. This was the first public library in the colonies (later America). 3

**1765-** Penn’s Medical School was not only the first medical school in the colonies (later America), but this also made it the first educational institution in the colonies to become a university (University of Pennsylvania). 3

**1775-** Keeping up with Penn’s vision of a city of “Brotherly Love” where ALL people are treated equally, the first Anti- Slavery society was founded in Philadelphia. 4

**1776-** This was a big year, not only for Philadelphia but for the world! In 1776, Philadelphia was the birthplace of the United States of America, the first democratic republic in the world. 5

**1791-** The first national bank, created by Alexander Hamilton, resided in Philadelphia. 6

**1790-** Philadelphia was home to the first ever stock exchange in America. 2

**1792-** The first United States Mint opened in Philadelphia. 6

**1798-** Philadelphia was the largest US city, home of the nation’s capital and the economic center for the country. It was also the scene of the first bank robbery in America at Carpenter’s Hall. 3

**1777-** Philadelphia had previously served as the capital for the First Continental Congress (1774) but it was now the first capital of the United States of America.6

**1776-** Betsy Ross, of Philadelphia, is accredited with sewing the first American flag. 

**1805-** Philadelphia is known for many things…One of those include its love for the Arts. This has been a longstanding passion for Philadelphians and in 1805; the Academy of the Fine Arts was established and is now the oldest art institute and school in the nation. 3

**Works Cited**

**1809-** Following the founding of the Academy of Fine Arts was the creation of the first theatre in America in 1809, the Walnut Street Theatre.

**1946-** The University of Pennsylvania, in Philadelphia, was home to the first “large- scale, electronic, digital computer capable of being reprogrammed to solve a full range of computing problems.” This was the first computer in the world. 6

**1919-** Before the infamous Macy’s Thanksgiving Day parade in New York, the Gimbel Brothers sponsored the first Thanksgiving Day parade in the nation which took place in Philadelphia. 2

**1829-** The first penitentiary in America and the first of its kind in the world, the Eastern State Penitentiary was erected. 3 It was the first prison of its time and is referred to day as America’s most historic prison. 7

**1876-** The First World’s Fair was in America was held in Philadelphia as a centennial celebration of the nation’s independence. 3

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